

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3500

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

NSC FOR BRZEZINSKI AND AARON
FROM DICK MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: TALKS WITH OWEN

SUMMARY: OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH OWEN THIS EVENING
(FEBRUARY 23) RESUMED WHERE WE LEFT OFF THIS MORNING
WITH CONSIDERATION OF HOW WE SHOULD MANAGE OUR CONTACTS
WITH VARIOUS PARTIES. BULK OF DISCUSSION CENTERED ON
EFFORT TO DEFINE CURRENT STATUS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN
PROPOSALS AND CLOSELY RELATED ISSUE OF HOW WE SHOULD
CONTINUE TO RELATE TO PATRIOTIC FRONT. GENERAL AGREE-
MENT REACHED ON SUBSTANCE OF OUR ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH
MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE AND ON APPROACHES TO FRONT LINE.

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MOST SIGNIFICANT WAS OWEN'S AGREEMENT NOT TO PURSUE HIS
PROPOSED EFFORT TO PERSUADE KAUNDA TO PUSH NKOMO TOWARDS
SALISBURY NEGOTIATIONS. WE WILL ATTEMPT TO TACKLE
REMAINING UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN FINAL SESSION WITH
JOHNNY GRAHAM TOMORROW MORNING. END SUMMARY

1. BASED ON OUR DISCUSSIONS THIS MORNING, FCO HAD

PREPARED PAPER OUTLINING AREAS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN OURSELVES AND BRITISH ON HOW WE SHOULD RELATE TO VARIOUS PARTIES GIVEN NEW SITUATION CREATED BY NEGOTIATIONS IN SALISBURY. FIRST ITEM ON AGENDA INVOLVED EFFORT TO DEFINE CURRENT STATUS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. DURING COURSE OF LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE, SUGGESTIONS RANGED FROM SAYING US-UK PLAN REPRESENTED "IDEAL" SOLUTION WHICH WE WOULD DEFEND ONLY IF CHALLENGED TO DO SO IN UN OR OTHER PUBLIC FORA (OWEN TO OUR SUGGESTION THAT PROPOSALS REMAINED UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION. IN THE END, WE REACHED TENTATIVE COMPROMISE ON FORMULATION THAT UK-US PROPOSALS REPRESENTED IDEAL SOLUTION THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT. OBVIOUSLY, WE AND BRITISH INCLINED TO INTERPRET TERM "SUPPORT" DIFFERENTLY, AND WE MAY ATTEMPT TO TACKLE THIS ISSUE AGAIN WITH GRAHAM IN FINAL SESSION TOMORROW.

2. WE WERE ABLE TO REACH TENTATIVE AGREEMENT ON CONTENT OF MESSAGES WE WOULD ATTEMPT TO CONVEY TO MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE, WHICH HEW CLOSELY TO LINE OWEN HAS ALREADY TAKEN WITH SITHOLE IN HIS THREE MEETINGS WITH HIM. (OWEN HAD FINAL MEETING WITH SITHOLE THIS AFTERNOON PRIOR TO SITHOLE'S DEPARTURE FOR NAIROBI.) IT WAS AGREED THAT SIMILAR APPROACH TO MUZOREWA SHOULD BE MADE SOON IN VIEW OF ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS IN SALISBURY, BUT MECHANISM FOR CONVEYING IT WAS NOT FINALLY RESOLVED.

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IN EFFORT TO STIFFEN THEM IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH SMITH, WE AGREED TO SPELL OUT CRITERIA WE BELIEVE WOULD HAVE TO BE MET IF SETTLEMENT IN SALISBURY WERE TO STAND SOME CHANCE OF WINNING SOME MEASURE OF INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTABILITY. WE WOULD NOT RPT NOT IMPLY OR SUGGEST, HOWEVER, ANY COMMITMENT TO RECOGNIZE OR LEGITIMIZE AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IF THESE CRITERIA WERE MET. THE CRITERIA WOULD INCLUDE:

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QTE - A. IF MR. SMITH MUST HAVE A PLACE IN THE INTERIM
ADMINISTRATION, HE SHOULD NOT BE THE HEAD OF IT;

B. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE RHODESIAN
FRONT CONTROL THE ARMED FORCES. IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE
FOR THE ARMED FORCES AND THE POLICE TO BE THE RESPONSIBILITY
OF SOME NEUTRAL CHAIRMAN;

C. THE RHODESIAN PARLIAMENT SHOULD EXERCISE NO
LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD;

D. IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PERSUADE
INTERNATIONAL OPINION TO ACCEPT ANY POPULAR TEST OF THE
NEW ARRANGEMENTS IF THAT WAS CARRIED OUT UNDER THE
CONTROL, OR APPARENT CONTROL, OF THE RHODESIAN FRONT
OR THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE
A NEED FOR OUTSIDE OBSERVERS (BUT IT IS HARD TO SEE
WHO WOULD UNDERTAKE THIS TASK);

E. IF THE EUROPEANS MUST HAVE 28 PERCENT OF THE
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SEATS IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEIR
MEMBERS SHOULD PLAY NO PART IN THE ELECTION, OR IMPEACH-
MENT, OF THE PRESIDENT (AND, AS ALREADY AGREED, THAT
THEY SHOULD BE DEBARRED FROM ENTERING INTO A COALITION
GOVERNMENT WITH ANOTHER PARTY);

F. IN GENERAL, THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION
SHOULD BE MODELLED AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE ON THAT
OUTLINED IN THE ANGLO/AMERICAN PROPOSALS;

G. THERE SHOULD BE A GENUINE INTEGRATION OF THE
PRESENT SECURITY FORCES AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS (EG
GUERRILLA MILITARY LEADERS MUST HAVE A RESPONSIBLE

PLACE IN THE NEW COMMAND STRUCTURE);

H. MAJORITY RULE ELECTIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE SO THAT INDEPENDENCE WILL COME ABOUT BEFORE THE END OF 1978;

I. THERE SHOULD BE A GENUINE ATTEMPT TO INVOLVE THE EXTERNALLY-BASED NATIONALISTS TO TAKE PART. UNQTE

3. THERE WAS BRIEF DISCUSSION OF WHETHER TO COMMUNICATE A MESSAGE SIMILAR TO THE ABOVE DIRECTLY TO SMITH, WITH DECISION ON THIS ISSUE LEFT FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION.

4. ISSUE THAT CONSUMED MOST OF THE MEETING WAS QUESTION OF HOW WE SHOULD MAINTAIN CONTACTS WITH PATRIOTIC FRONT, WHICH BROUGHT US BACK TO OPENING DISCUSSION OF HOW TO DEFINE STATUS OF UK-US PLAN. REMINDED OF OUR AGREEMENT WITH PF FOLLOWING MALTA ON ANOTHER ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS ON OUR PROPOSALS, OWEN ARGUED SIMULTANEOUSLY THAT (A) THERE WAS NO POINT IN FURTHER MEETINGS WITH PF BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS TOWARD ACCEPTING OUR FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS, AND (B) IT WAS DANGEROUS TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS WITH PF ON OUR
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PROPOSALS BECAUSE, UNDER PRESSURE OF EVENTS IN SALISBURY THEY MIGHT ACCEPT OUR PROPOSALS, THEREBY OBLIGING US TO TAKE NEXT STEP OF DELIVERING SMITH BY APPLYING ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS, INCLUDING OIL, AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA (WHEN WE POINTED OUT TO OWEN LOGICAL INCONSISTENCY OF THESE TWO ARGUMENTS, HE LAMELY RESPONDED THAT BOTH WERE TRUE.) UNDER OUR CONTINUED PRODDING, OWEN FINALLY AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM OF HOW WE MIGHT CONTINUE TO ENGAGE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IN CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS WAS A SERIOUS ONE, WITH WHICH HE WOULD HAVE TO COME TO GRIPS IF AND WHEN THE FRONT APPROACHES US FOR ANOTHER MEETING. HE WOULD NOT COMMIT HIMSELF IN ADVANCE ON HOW HE WOULD RESPOND TO SUCH A REQUEST, THOUGH CLEARLY HE WOULD MAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO AVOID SUCH A MEETING.

5. BEFORE ADJOURNING, WE CONFIRMED THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED THIS MORNING THAT OUR NEXT APPROACH TO THE FRONT LINE SHOULD BE MADE JOINTLY BY OUR AMBASSADORS IN RESPECTIVE CAPITALS. ESSENCE OF APPROACH WOULD BE EFFORT TO PROBE CURRENT THINKING AND ATTITUDES OF FRONT LINE WHILE GIVING THEM SOME SENSE OF NEW SITUATION BOTH WE AND THEY FACE IN LIGHT OF EVENTS IN SALISBURY. WE AGREED THAT INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS EXERCISE WOULD HAVE TO BE CAREFULLY DRAFTED AND COORDINATED.

6. FINALLY, OWEN'S MAJOR CONCESSION WAS AGREEMENT THAT WE WOULD NOT MOVE TOO HASTILY TO ENGINEER NKOMO INTO THE SALISBURY TALKS. (WHILE WE WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT WEIGHT OF OUR ARGUMENTS CARRIED THE DAY, WE SUSPECT THAT KEY FACTOR IN OWEN'S RELENTING WAS REPORT HE RECEIVED THIS AFTERNOON FROM HIS "CONFIDENTIAL AND DENIABLE CHANNEL" TO KAUNDA. ACCORDING TO OWEN, KAUNDA WAS CATEGORICAL IN STATING THERE IS NO WAY HE WOULD URGE

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NKOMO TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PARTIES IN SALISBURY, EXCEPT ON THE BASIS OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS.) WE IN TURN ACCEPTED OWEN'S SUGGESTION THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE SENSITIVE TO ANY INDICATIONS THAT KAUNDA MIGHT BE CHANGING HIS ATTITUDE.

7. COMMENT: WHILE WE DID NOT HAVE A MEETING OF THE MINDS THIS EVENING, WE WERE ABLE TO IDENTIFY OUR DIFFERENCES MORE PRECISELY AND DEVELOP A SIMILAR SENSE OF PACE ABOUT HOW WE MAINTAIN OUR CONTACTS WITH ALL THE PARTIES. WE AGREED IT IS IMPORTANT TO REINFORCE THE DETERMINATION OF SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA TO BARGAIN FOR A REAL TRANSFER OF POWER, AND WE WILL TRY TOMORROW TO PIN DOWN EXACTLY HOW WE DO THIS.

OWEN'S MAJOR DIFFICULTY IN ADDRESSING QUESTIONS OF PRESENT POSTURE AND FUTURE STRATEGY HAS TO DO WITH
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HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, AND THIS IN LARGE MEASURE STEMS FROM HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL VULNERABILITY. STILL, HE HAS WITHDRAWN FROM HIS EARLIER VIEW THAT WE MUST MOVE URGENTLY TO SHOEHORN NKOMO INTO THE SALISBURY TALKS -- AN UNDERTAKING WHICH WE REGARD AS HIGHLY UNREALISTIC. HE NOW BELIEVES WE SHOULD "PROBE" TO DISCOVER HOW THE VARIOUS PARTIES HAVE REACTED TO THE SALISBURY ANNOUNCEMENT AND WHETHER NEW POSSIBILITIES MIGHT EMERGE.

OWEN ALSO WITHDREW FROM TOO HASTILY LAYING A BLACK WREATH ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. WE ALL RECOGNIZED THE LONG ODDS AGAINST EVER SEEING THE PROPOSALS REALIZED IN DETAIL, BUT OWEN AGREED THAT WE SHOULD NOT ABANDON OUR PLAN IN FAVOR OF A SALISBURY SETTLEMENT WHICH IN THE END MAY PROVE ILLUSORY OR INADEQUATE. OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSALS GIVES US SOME DEGREE OF LEVERAGE ON EVERYONE AND KEEPS OUR HAND IN BOTH SIDES OF THE GAME.

FINALLY, WE AGREED THAT THE UNCERTAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN SALISBURY ARE NOT GOOD GROUNDS FOR PRECIPITOUS ACTION BUT FOR MORE DELIBERATE CONSIDERATION AND REFLECTION IN LONDON AND WASHINGTON. SO FAR WE HAVE BEEN UNDER REMARKABLY LITTLE PRESSURE FROM THE AFRICANS TO TAKE A DEFINITIVE STAND ABOUT THE INTERNAL TALKS AND THIS GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROCEED CAREFULLY AND TO KEEP THE ANGLO-AMERICAN APPROACH INTACT. BREWSTER

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